

period, a nation destined to hold a prominent position, and play an important part in the future history of this continent.

I am fully aware that no words I can utter—nothing I can express—indeed, nothing any of us may say or do to-night, will add one iota to the world-wide fame of our immortal Shakspeare; but it is due to the greatness of his genius, as it is to the Divinity who sent into the world so bright a Scintillation of his divine power, that we should thus commemorate his birth.

It is moreover, due to ourselves, that we should make these demonstrations—for who knows but that they may prove incentive to latent talent, and bring out some bright intellectual treasure hitherto hidden, like the diamond buried in the dust of earth, whose extraction from obscurity may be effected, by such encouragement as this celebration of Shakspeare's greatness holds out to rising genius.

England—proud Albion—has produced her Milton, Shakspeare, Dryden, and other great poets and writers. Scotland—Bonnie Scotland—her Burns, Scott, Campbell.—Ireland—Dear Erin—her Goldsmith, Moore,—and, would I make one of our Orators of the day blush, if I made up the trinity of number, with the name of D'Arcy McGee.—Germany—the vaterland—her Lessing, Goethe, Schiller.—France—La belle France—her Corneille, Molière, Racine, and others; and shall not Canada, a community made up of all those nationalities, also produce hers?

But these reunions for such purposes have at least their beneficial influence in this, that they draw the attention of the masses to thought, and the study of the writings of the Bards whose praises are thus chaunted.

Of Shakspeare's works and their influence on the human mind, it is not my particular province to speak to-night, if, indeed, I were equal to such a task; but, on an occasion like this, I feel I would seem wanting in that enthusiasm which should pervade the breast of an Englishman, in contemplating the writing of so great a poet of his country, were I to permit this opportunity to pass without making at least a passing reference. Shakspeare was the great poet of nature and of art. He held up truthfully the mirror to nature, and adorned her with the high art of supernatural genius. Of the influence of his works, I might dare to say, that the great moral truths propounded by him,—clothed in language of such telling force, as Shakspeare alone knew how to express, are of the most sublime character; and help to the highest mental as well as moral refinement. Virtue is described by him in words, that pourtray it to the human mind as ever the snow-white purity of virgin innocence, whilst vice is depicted by him, "in form and shape so hideous," and appalling; and always made to appear "so foul and unnatural," that one who has studied Shakspeare, would almost doubt, whether vice ever was a monster, who oft seen could ever be "endured, pitied, or embraced." In the social relation of mankind, the doctrines inculcated by Shakspeare's sentences have an equally powerful moral effect. No incident in the social relation lacks an appropriate and telling expression. In the political world how wide and vast has been the influence of his dramatic writings. His historical dramas, indeed almost all his works are historical, have doubtless effected a highly beneficial influence in affairs of State and in the Courts of Monarchs. His play of Henry VI. alone, might be referred to as one illustration of this. The Prince of Wales of that period, Prince Henry of the play, although a good-hearted generous Prince, was but a scapegrace compared with our noble Prince of Wales, who beside the high moral influence exerted over him by his late lamented father, and by our most noble and virtuous Queen his mother, doubtless trained much from the reading of Shakspeare that has helped to mould the character of England's future king. And apart from that particular case I might say that the influence of Shakspeare's writings on the Monarchs and Courts and public men, not merely of England, but of France, Germany and indeed of all the European Continental powers and States, and may I not add of America, has been almost equally great. For Shakspeare is not read by those speaking the English tongue merely, but has been translated into French and German, at least; and is, perhaps, more read and better understood now, if not more appreciated by the people of France and Germany, than by those speaking Shakspeare's peculiar tongue. As an instance of the force and influence of Shakspeare's writings in the acquisition of the knowledge of the English language, I might mention the name of the great Magyar Kossuth, who avowed he had acquired his acquaintance with the English language by the reading and study of our great poet; and whoever read the speeches of the great Hungarian, made by him when in the United States some years ago, must be struck with the force and power of his appeals in English. I thank you for the patience with which you have listened to my humble

endeavors to do justice to our great poet on this occasion. They are but introductory of the great orators of the evening, to follow me in French and English, the Honorable Messrs. Chauveau and McGee, whom I have no doubt will do ampler justice to the genius and memory of the man, who has been justly pronounced to be "the poet for all age and time"—Shakspeare, the "world's poet."

HON. MR. CHAUVEAU'S ADDRESS.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,—In placing a French speech in their programme, the originators of this fête were willing to give it a character corresponding to the times, to the renown of Shakspeare, and to the condition of our society. Literature is in fact a bond which unites peoples one to the other, as well as commerce, but in a more elevated order of things; it is the exchange of purely intellectual products; the other is only the exchange of products of material development, effected, it is true, by the intelligent industry of man. This century, which has witnessed the last scenes of a heroic struggle between France and England, has also seen for the first time since the Crusades, in a series of military expeditions in the Crimea and on the shores of the extreme East, their flags floating in union; it has seen, for the first time, the breaking down of the barriers to commerce on the two sides of the channel, and a treaty, nearly of free trade, promulgated by the nephew of him who had proclaimed the continental blockade; it has seen, in short the influence of English literature extended to France, as, in the 17th and 18th centuries, that of France had invaded the country of Shakspeare. However, the political atmosphere of Europe is perhaps at this moment in a threatening state, for notwithstanding the picture I have sketched, the world there is in a state of mutual distrust, of useless negotiations, of war which is still more useless, and God only knows what bad days may have been reserved for our ancient and for our new mother lands. But this fraternity, which there is but a happy accident, a trace of heaven for the peace of the world, is here, for the two races, a condition essential to existence. France and England, after more than a century of wars on this continent, have left us here in presence of each other, and mingled with each other, like the glorious remains with which they have strewn our soil. Notwithstanding, however, that we cannot, by the force of circumstances, do otherwise than share a common destiny, live the same life and enjoy together all the rights which belong to a citizen under the British constitution, we are yet, after more than a century, to a certain extent, greater strangers to each other than the inhabitants of the borders of the Seine and of the Thames. If a remarkable book appears in London it is at once translated into the French language; if a play makes a sensation in Paris, it is forthwith adapted to the English stage. Is it not true that this is quite different in Canada? that the French literary progress and the English literary progress are comparatively isolated, ignoring each other almost completely? And yet how many times on solemn occasions have we not sworn that it should be otherwise! How many times have we not said that if it was as impossible, as cowardly, as impious for the one as for the other to renounce its language, to abdicate its rights, its historical traditions, we must, nevertheless, endeavor to understand, to respect, and to mutually assist one another. And what has been the result of this? The day after these protestations and these fine promises, have we not returned to the old state? Thus, Mr. President, when I heard you express the hope that this celebration might be the dawn of a new era, confiding in your generous utterance, and putting away the scepticism which we learn of experience, I said to myself, "Better late than never;" the day has at last come.

And what name, what memory were more worthy than the name and memory of Shakspeare to inspire such a thought, and to preside over such a success. It is in fact, the peculiar property of his glory to have been sufficiently original and personal in the immense variety of his repertory to impress his unique stamp on all his works; sufficiently natural in the ubiquity of his theatre to never cease to be English, and nevertheless sufficiently universal in the grandeur of his conceptions to be comprehended and claimed to-day by humanity as a whole. Several cities of Greece disputed their title to the birth-place of Homer. At present we take less heed of a great man's birth place than of his opinions and beliefs. It seems as if in proportion as the distances of space which separate us are diminished, those which separate us in the domain of thought are increased. Thus no one has cared to inquire if it is true that Stratford-on-Avon saw the birth of the poet who sang of Desdemona and Juliet; but much interest has been taken in learning if he were of the old faith of his forefathers, or if the creed which was in his time predominant in his country, possessed the homage of this